

BRUCE ROBERTSON, A.I.A.

Bruce Robertson (1932 - 1987) was a uniquely talented architect who successfully transferred his mastery of modernist design and engineering to creative adaptive reuse projects in Colorado, and finally to elegant, open-air island homes on St. John, US Virgin Islands.

Bruce went to St. James prep school in Hagerstown, MD, graduating in 1950 with honors. He was Captain of the football club in his senior year. He earned his BA at Princeton in 1954, with majors in economics and sociology.

He joined the army after college, and was stationed in Puerto Rico. It was during this time that Bruce discovered his passion for architecture.

After receiving an honorable discharge



in 1956, Bruce commenced study of architecture at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (CIT), later Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). He received his bachelors in Architecture in 1959.

Late that year, Bruce accepted a position with architecture firm A. G. Odell, Jr. & Associates, in Charlotte, NC. A close friend and classmate from CIT, Charles Hastings, also made the same move. Bruce had already married Suzanne York in 1957, and Suzanne's best friend from childhood, Angela "Cranny" Cranford, came to Charlotte and married Charles in 1961. The 2 families were close, and Bruce and Charles had some professional collaboration.

In 1961 Bruce made a move to Walter Hook & Associates (WHA), also in Charlotte. This firm changed names in mid 1966 to become The Freeman White Associates (FWA). With this firm Bruce arguably did his finest work.

While at WHA, Bruce took the 1964-1965 academic year to teach architecture at the University of Leeds, Yorkshire, England.

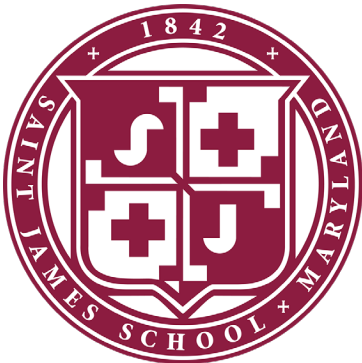
On Feb. 6, 1966, Bruce received his A.I.A. Certification and by Fall of 1967, he established his own architecture firm, Bruce Robertson Associates, in Charlotte. This firm under the leadership of Bruce continued in the same general direction as his predecessor firms, designing modernist style hospitals, jails and other civic structures. For his offices he chose the



iconic Home Federal Building, which he himself had designed. Bruce's firm won a NC AIA award, adding to 3 others he was previously granted.

In the summer of 1968, after but a year of running his own company, Bruce took what must have felt like the opportunity of a lifetime to return to his native Pittsburgh and join the city's nationally notable Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). There, Bruce championed construction of hundreds of affordable housing units before resigning the URA in May, 1970, with regrets from the organization's Board of Directors.

Bruce returned to architectural work for the dynamic firm Tasso Katselas Associates (Pittsburgh), and did some outstanding



work there.

On the personal side, not so easy. In Feb. 1969, tragedy struck as Suzanne, Bruce's wife and the mother of the couple's 3 children Laurie, Amy and Robbie, died due to a sudden onslaught of cancer. By the Summer of 1971, it was time for a change.

The change was monumental. It came in the form of a dramatic move to Boulder Colorado, an up-and-coming college town with a vibe that Bruce appreciated. Bruce would no longer work in urban planning, and neither would he work for another architecture firm, for the rest of his career.

In Boulder, Bruce worked under a design-build concept. Simply, he would buy a fine but run down old home, renovate it and add additional dwelling capacity, and then resell at double or triple the purchase price. Or, alternatively, he would keep the property and harvest rental income. It was quite like playing Monopoly, a game that Bruce was genius-level good at.

Pine Street 1 and 2 are fine examples of his early work in Boulder, but the masterpiece of the era was the Mule Barn project in Crested Butte, Colorado. It was acclaimed as a marvel, defying convention in numerous ways and showcasing impressive lofty spaces. Somehow at the same time Bruce made it all seem easy.

During this era Bruce showed his talent in leading teams through vision, and the Bozo Builders construction team he developed became renowned in its own right.

In terms of his Colorado designs, one can see the modernist sensibilities through creative use of space and lofty, open plans. This was merged with a craftsman aesthetic adding rustic originality to his projects.

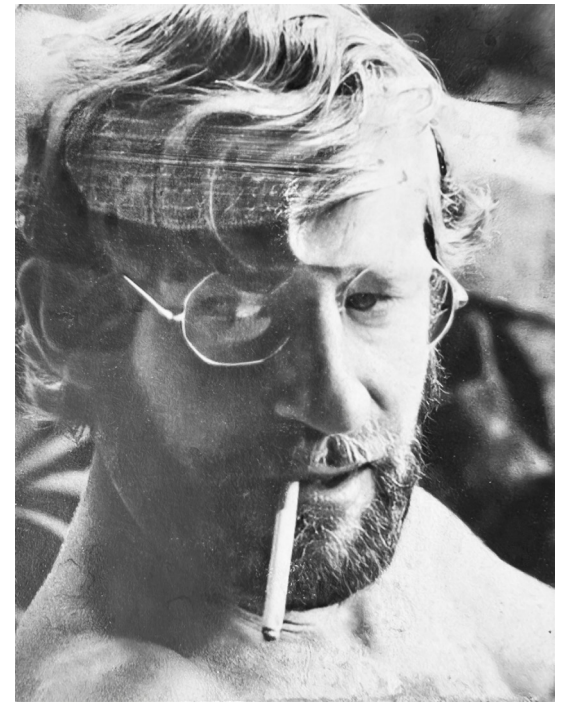
In 1979, Bruce embarked upon a new venture. He took a working vacation in sleepy but up and coming St. John, US Virgin Islands, and built a beach home at Great Cruz Bay #1, with the help of some of the Bozos. By 1982 he and Chata Roberts, his inseparable partner and later wife, created the island masterpiece, Great Cruz Bay #2, to great acclaim.

Bruce's homes still carried the underlying mastery of modernist structural approaches and maintained the charming use of creative carpentry, but expanded further to showcase distinct living modules brought together by central flow spaces, light, air, and use of local materials like coral rocks he found on the beach.

From then on Bruce designed dozens of homes on St. John, including his Hart Bay residence, finished in charming down-island style.

One of Bruce's last architectural projects was the unique hand-hewn home he and Chata built along Lightening Creek in the panhandle of Idaho, close to the Canadian border. It was loaded with charm and constructed with a laughably small budget.

His final venture with Chata was the restoration of an adorable cottage on Clare Island in Ireland.



During these days, Bruce was still producing designs in St. John, and it was at Hart Bay that he died suddenly, of a heart attack, on Feb. 21, 1987, at the young age of 54.

It had been a productive career, punctuated by flashes of brilliance at design of modernist civic buildings, refreshingly original Colorado homes blending old and new, and creative home concepts in St. John that brought the bohemian island lifestyle alive. All the while, as one Princeton classmate recalled, "he made it all fun."

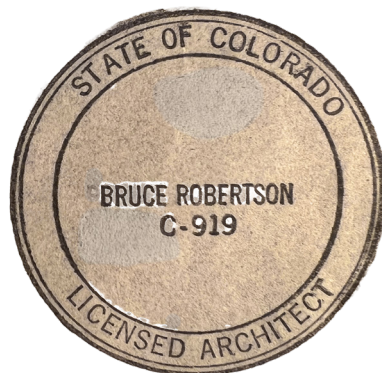
Above: Bruce Robertson, 1970s

Facing page left: Bruce at A. G. Odell & Associates, 1959

Facing page right: Bruce, 1966

ura

Urban
Redevelopment
Authority
of Pittsburgh



Facing page: the Home Federal Building, designed by Bruce and completed in 1967. Image from Bruce Robertson large format leather portfolio



Bruce Robertson, Architect, 1968



THE YOUNG MODERNIST

Bruce began his professional architecture career at the notable firm A. G. Odell, Jr. & Associates, in Charlotte, North Carolina, in late 1959.

Odell was perhaps the most notable modernist working in Charlotte, overseeing designs that won 75 awards and being the President of the national AIA in 1964. Bruce's work at Odell, his earliest, includes good-to-great designs in a more mainstream (at the time) "International Style" of modernism. Key Bruce designs included the UNC Charlotte master plan and core buildings, the Baltimore Civic Center, and several core buildings within Johnson C. Smith University.

In mid 1961 Bruce moved to another notable firm, Walter Hook & Associates (WHA). WHA designed the North Carolina National Bank Building of 1961, the first modern glass and steel skyscraper in Charlotte and the first to follow the Mies Van Der Rohe glass curtain wall model.

Bruce did arguably his best work for WHA, which in June 1966 changed its name to Freeman-White Associates (FWA). His most notable contribution to the firm was undoubtedly the Home Federal Bank building, which in 2008 won listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Other award-winning designs by Bruce included the West Charlotte High School Auditorium, and the Mecklenburg County Jail. Not winning an award but beautiful nonetheless was the Southern Railway Passenger Station, which is now considered NRHP-eligible by NC officials.

During the 1964-1965 academic year Bruce accepted a teaching position at Leeds University, Yorkshire, England. During this time he had an interesting project, Invershiel, which involved building a complete 16th century Scottish village in the highlands of NC.

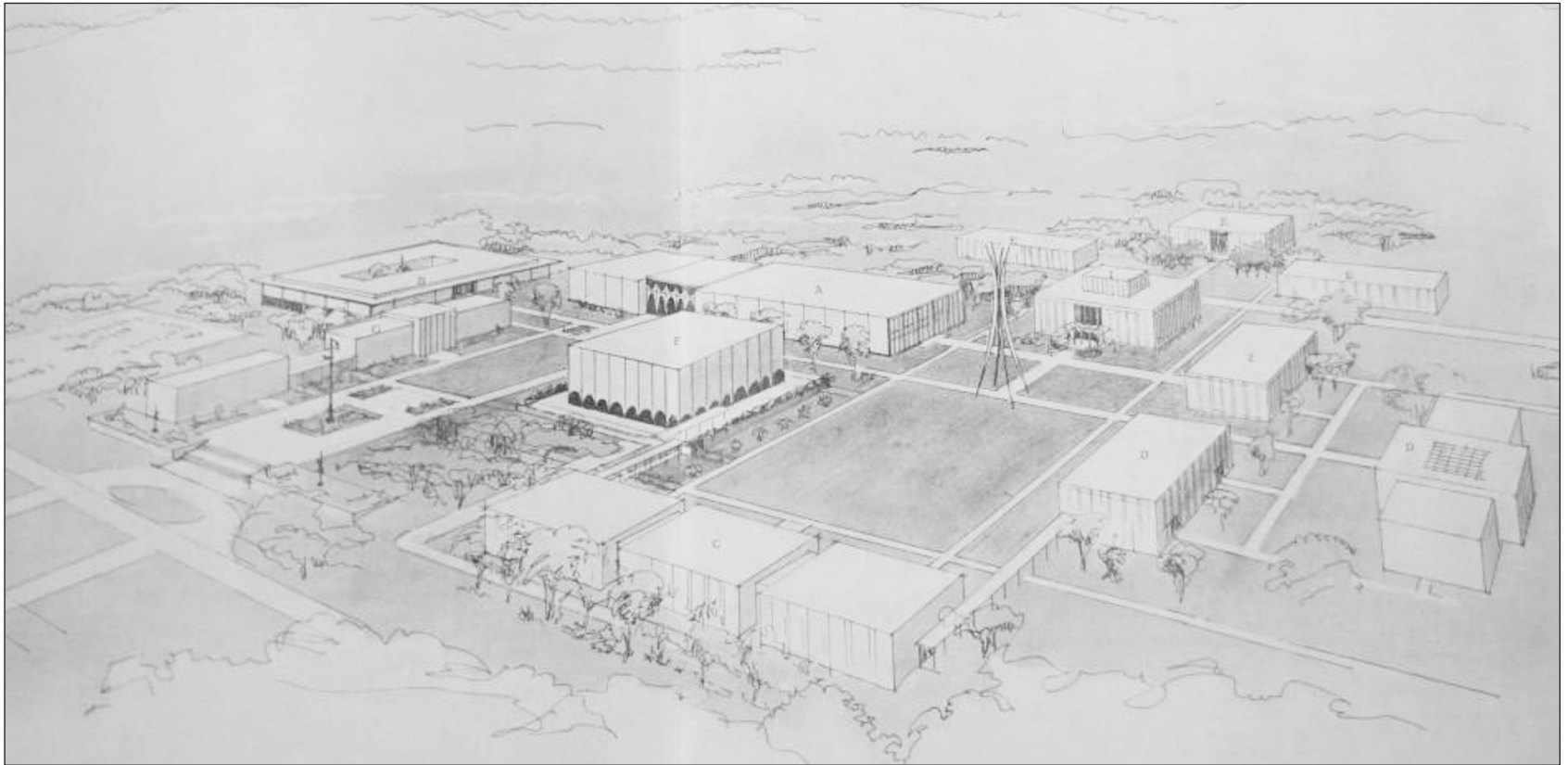
Bruce was accredited by the A.I.A. on Feb. 6, 1966.

In the Fall of 1967, he established Bruce

Robertson Associates, with fine offices in room 600 of the Home Federal Building. The firm won an AIA award for the Mecklenburg Center for Human Development, and produced other interesting designs in the Charlotte area.

In the coming pages, we will review the most significant of Bruce's designs during the 9 year Charlotte era.

UNC CHARLOTTE CAMPUS



University of North Carolina, Charlotte (UNCC)

Master Plan, Kennedy Science Building, Atkins Library, Cone University Center and Macy Liberal Arts Building

Originally Charlotte College

9201 University City Boulevard

Design and working drawings for AG Odell & Associates

Completed 1961-1963

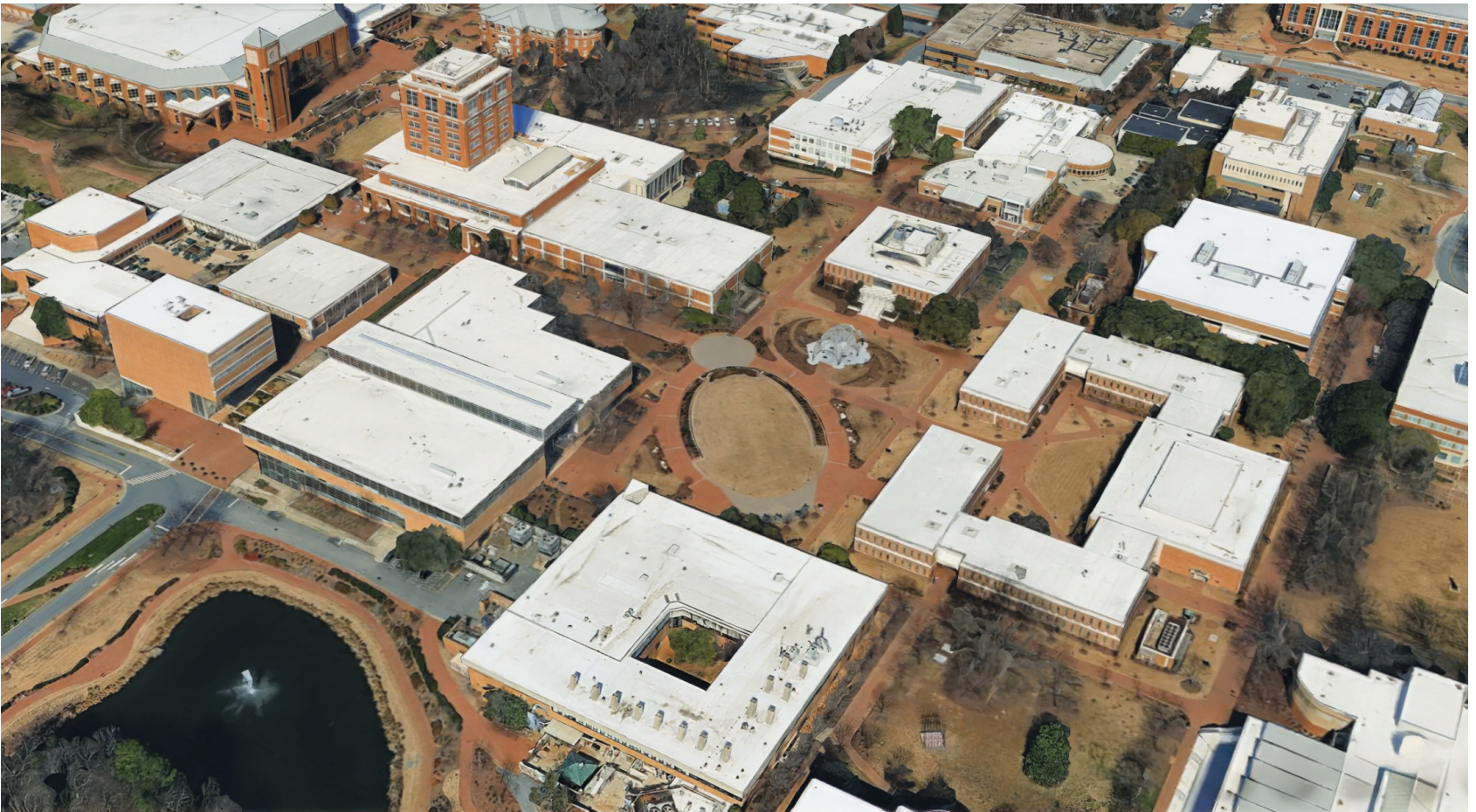
Still there

Susan V. Mayer's comprehensive 2019 study of modernist architecture in Charlotte is a great read for those interested in the context in which Bruce worked. The Study deemed Bruce's Kennedy Building worthy of study for possible National Register of Historic Places status.

Above: Drawing of the Charlotte College master plan by Bruce. The Cone University Center is in the upper left hand corner. From the large sculpture drawn in the center of the main campus green: at left, Atkins Library; above, Kennedy Science Building; at right, Macy Liberal Arts Building

Facing page: Atkins, Kennedy and Macy buildings seen from left to right, with Amy, Laurie and Robbie in the foreground in 1965





What Mary C. Dominick Had to Say (2013):

Mary C. Dominick's 2013 graduate thesis about Charlotte College (later UNCC) provides 69 pages of insights and perspective about the planning and implementation of this modernist campus.

"Modernist design has since fallen out of favor. With each passing day, more and more examples of it are falling into disrepair and facing demolition.

The Charlotte College buildings stand as a reminder of Charlotte in the 1960s. The Charlotte College buildings provide a striking example of Modernism, retain their essential distinctive form, are the oldest edifices on campus, and are worthy of preservation because they are cultural artifacts of the physical beginnings of what is now the University of North Carolina at Charlotte."

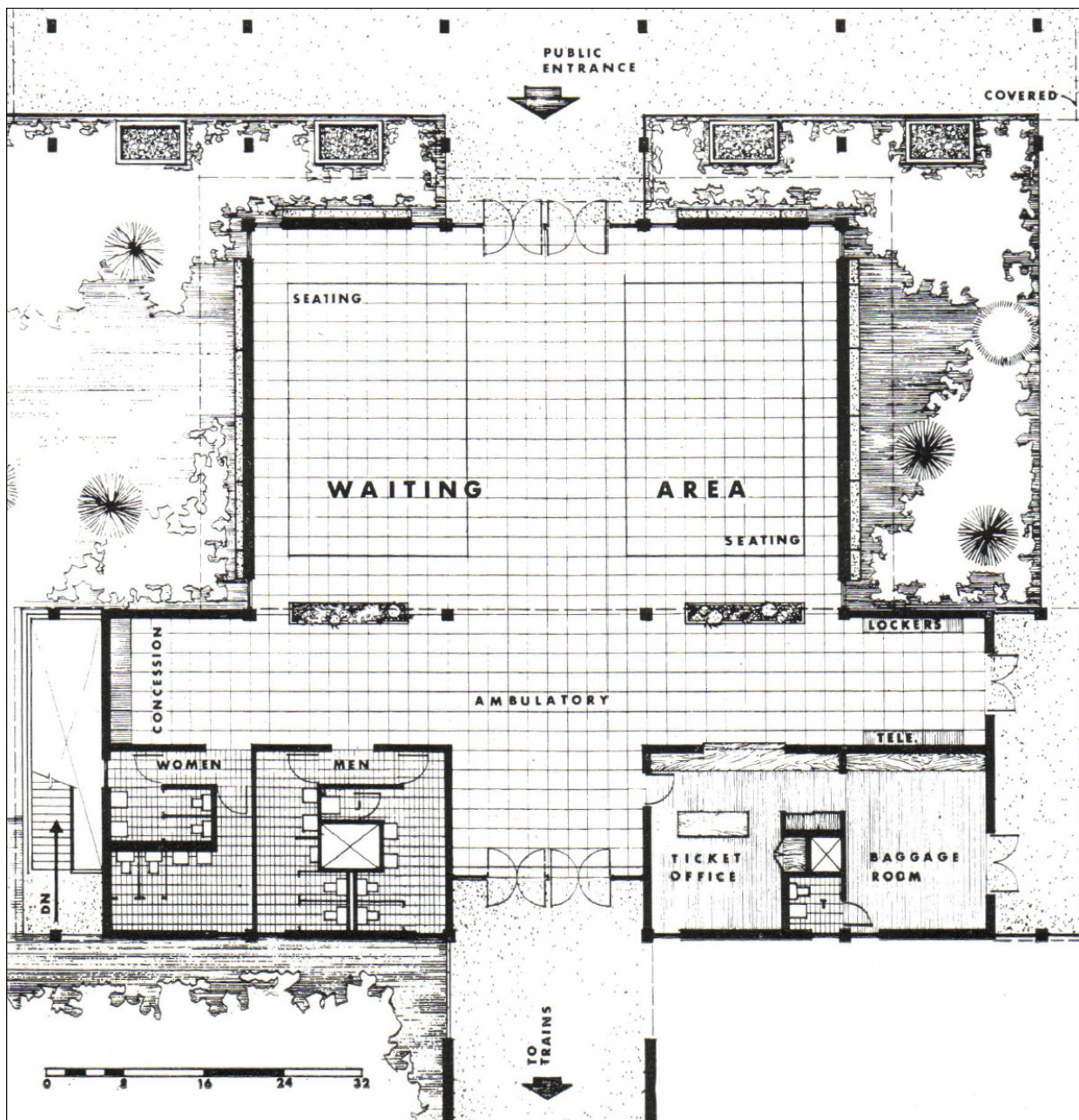


Right: students in front of the Kennedy Building in the 1960s

Facing page: the campus today as seen on Google Earth. The essential Bruce master plan, and his buildings, are still visible. Orientation is same as the facing page drawing. The Cone Building is the low square building at upper right. From the large central green, one sees Atkins Library at left, Kennedy Building above, and Macy Building at right



SOUTHERN RAILWAY PASSENGER STATION



Southern Railway Passenger Station

Later Charlotte Amtrak Station
1914 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte

Design and working drawings
for Walter Hook & Associates

Completed 1962

Still there

The AECON architectural study of 2015 deems this building eligible for addition to the National Register of Historic Places. As a result it is saved from demolition. More broadly, this project shows Bruce's exploration into pre-stressed concrete construction and demonstrates a bold, stylish and human take on mainstream institutional modernism.

Left: floor plan by Bruce

Facing page: the building as seen soon after its completion, from Bruce's portfolio



What the NC Department of Cultural Resources Had to Say (2015):

"The Southern Railway Passenger Station is an important example of Modern concrete architecture in Charlotte.

It meets Criterion C for Architecture and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

It was designed by [Bruce Robertson of] Walter Hook & Associates in 1962, and the building's distinctive pre-stressed structural system is its defining design and organizational feature. Also, the building, including its entrance canopy and track-side platform is formal in its spatial organization, in that symmetry was strictly imposed on the station's exterior and its interior functions and spaces. The building's

repeating tapered cast concrete posts and beams, including the highly finished expressed roof structure place this building within the theme of "structuralist" modern design.

By filling in the space between the waiting room's concrete posts with a continuous vertical and horizontal band of windows, the rough aggregate concrete panel walls are clearly non-load bearing. However, they do serve to "ground" the building and contrast with the more streamline smooth-finished concrete structural system.

The railroad station shares some design characteristics with the 1967 Home Federal Building in Charlotte designed by The Freeman-White Associates, the successor firm to Walter Hook & Associates. In broad terms both buildings are Modern in design, with their expressed structural systems

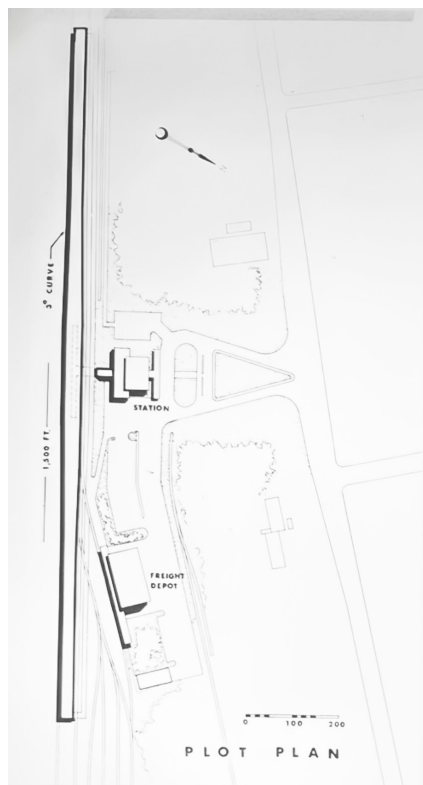
being predominant.

The concrete work of Kenzo Tange in Japan relates to both buildings. The 1966 North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Building in Durham also comes to mind. This perspective on concrete architectural design in the late 1950s and 1960s is more relevant to the Southern Railway Passenger Depot than the "Contemporary" and "Mid-Century Modern" approach."

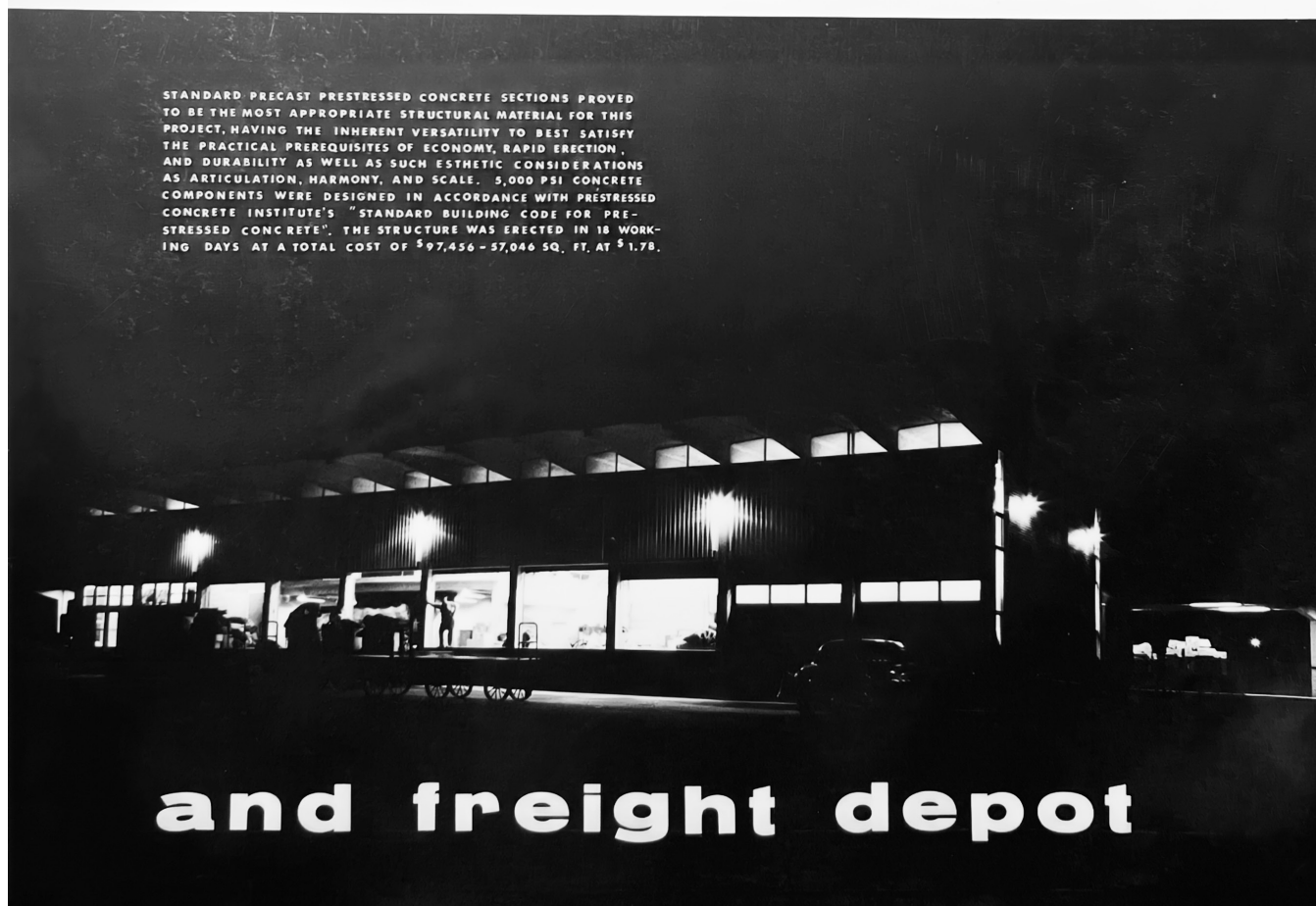


Images of the Southern Railway
Passenger Station from Bruce's
portfolio





STANDARD PRECAST PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SECTIONS PROVED TO BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE STRUCTURAL MATERIAL FOR THIS PROJECT, HAVING THE INHERENT VERSATILITY TO BEST SATISFY THE PRACTICAL PREREQUISITES OF ECONOMY, RAPID ERECTION, AND DURABILITY AS WELL AS SUCH ESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS AS ARTICULATION, HARMONY, AND SCALE. 5,000 PSI CONCRETE COMPONENTS WERE DESIGNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRESTRESSED CONCRETE INSTITUTE'S "STANDARD BUILDING CODE FOR PRE-STRESSED CONCRETE". THE STRUCTURE WAS ERECTED IN 18 WORKING DAYS AT A TOTAL COST OF \$97,456 - 57,046 SQ. FT. AT \$1.78.



and freight depot

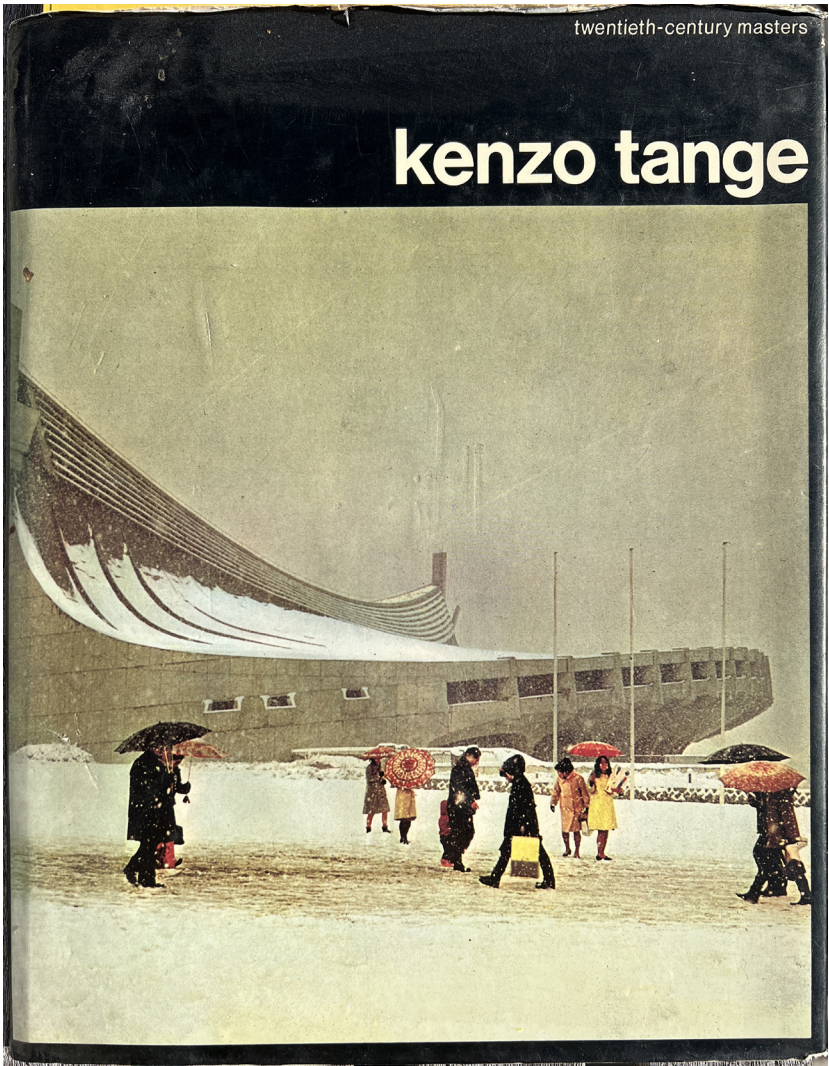


Above: the interior of the station as captured in 2019

Facing page: detail of the handsome pre-stressed concrete structure of the station, from the portfolio of Bruce



THE HOME FEDERAL BUILDING



Top: Book on Kenzo Tange, from Bruce's small personal collection

Bottom: seals of the 3 institutions that awarded Bruce for the design work on the HFB

Facing page: beautiful photo of the HFB from the Bruce's portfolio



The Home Federal Building

139 S. Tryon Street, Charlotte

Design and working drawings
for Walter Hook Associates
(later FWA)

Completed 1967

Still there

This widely acclaimed building won a NC AIA Merit Award in 1967, a Chamber of Commerce Award in 1968, and placement in the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.

thsi may be the most beautiful
office building in downtown
Charlotte.

It's interesting to note the Japanese influence in this design. The book shown at left about Kenzo Tange, Japanese master architect, is one of the few books on architecture that BR carried with him through his life. It reveals his deep admiration for Tange. Architectural historians have noted the Tange influences in this building even without knowing directly of Bruce's interest in him.



Owner: Home Federal Savings and Loan Association, Charlotte, North Carolina

Architect: The Freeman-White Associates, Inc., Charlotte, North Carolina

Interior Designer: Brock Arms, Glencoe, Illinois

General Contractor: Juno Construction Company, Charlotte, North Carolina

Ceiling Systems Contractor: Tomlinson Engineering Company, Charlotte, North Carolina

Home Federal Building, Charlotte, North Carolina—Dramatically bold and exciting, this impressive structure helps to create an image of progressive leadership for the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association.

Located near buildings over twice its height, this seven-story structure was designed to gain public attention through its unique architecture rather than its size. White concrete "balconies" emphasize the horizontal lines of each floor, giving the structure architectural integrity. In contrast to these horizontal lines, a soaring vertical elevator tower on one side of the building



Images from NC Architect Magazine, date unknown

spans the seven stories. This bold concrete tower is joined to the building by glassed elevator lobbies. Of particular interest is the palatial ground-floor lobby. Bordered by two stories of glass, this strikingly spacious area features an elegant

marble staircase that spirals upward to the executive offices in the mezzanine. The executive offices, trimmed with natural teak and ebonized ash woodwork, are unusually distinctive. Throughout the building, stylish contour chairs



and handsome teak furniture add dignity and color. Upholstery colors range from red-orange and vivid yellow in the public areas to more subdued greens and blues in the executive offices. The overall decor is luxurious. Blending well with this exquisite decor is an Armstrong Santaglio Travertone Ceiling System. Both handsome and functional, this ceiling

system offers excellent acoustical control and the safety of a Class I noncombustible ceiling material. Similar beauty and fire safety are provided by Armstrong Celtic Minatone and Celtic Minaboard Ceiling Systems in the corridors, elevator areas, and general office areas.



Images from NC Architect Magazine,
date unknown

What the National Register of Historic Places Had to Say (2008):

Below are excerpts from the excellent NRHP application by Cynthia de Miranda (for the full study see Extra Points 2 at the end of this book):

"The Home Federal Building presents a divergent vision of the International Style, ignoring the often employed Miesian model of dark glass walls accented by shining slender metal mullions. Instead, the building aggressively emphasizes the horizontal elements in its structural frame and clothes itself in precast concrete that creates texture though finish and expressive construction..."

... The Home Federal Building meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion C and Criterion Consideration G as the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the International Style and as a structure possessing high artistic value in expressing that style.

The Freeman-White Associates (known as Walter Hook and Associates during the building's planning period) designed this airy, elevated structure, which also shows the influence of Brutalism. The architects selected a reinforced-concrete structural system to create an open floor plan; divided interior space by function and displayed that division at the exterior; elegantly expressed structure and materials and used functional elements as ornament; organized the design by repetition of elements; and rendered all these features with a sensitivity to human scale and a flawless eye for detail.

The building, completed in 1967, is exceptionally significant at the local level as both a singular expression of the International Style and as the last intact first-generation International Style office building in Charlotte's commercial business district..."

"... In addition to its status as the only intact early Modernist office building in the city's central business district, the Home Federal Building is the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the International Style, displaying a "stylistic divergence" from

the Ludwig Mies van Der Rohe-derived rendition most typically associated with the International Style with regard to tall office buildings. The building also sharply differs from the version of the International Style seen in Charlotte for downtown office buildings before 1970, which tended to either reproduce variations on the Miesian theme of glass-enclosed boxes or feature precast concrete panels with undulating profiles or glittering surfaces as produced by A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates..."

"... The building's design originated with Beverly Freeman, the president and a principal of The Freeman-White Associates at the time. Freeman, a South Carolina native, attended Clemson University and moved to Charlotte to work for Walter Hook and Associates in 1948. He became president in 1963, upon the death of Walter Hook. The firm name changed in 1966 to The Freeman-White Associates. Freeman retired from the practice twenty years later, in 1986.

Freeman produced a sketch for the Home Federal Building and assigned the project to Bruce Robertson (1932-1987), a young architect who had recently joined the firm after a few years at A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates. Robertson was a "very talented" designer who "enjoyed working with precast concrete" recalls Hugh Edward White Jr., another principal of the firm at the time. Robertson's interest in precast concrete may have stemmed from his work at Odell, a firm that experimented with the material throughout the 1960s.

At Walter Hook and Associates, Robertson participated in designing the 1962 Southern Railway Passenger Station and the 1967 Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital, according to White's recollection. Both make use of precast concrete structurally and for other functional elements like sunshades and wall panels. Records relating to the design and construction of the building could not be located, but stylistic influences on the design are apparent.

The late 1950s and early 1960s work of two architects outside North Carolina, Kenzo Tange and Paul Rudolph, has much in common with the Home Federal design.

Tange and Rudolph were heavily covered in the national press in 1964, thanks to important commissions for each architect."

I corresponded with Cynthia in late 2025 and she further commented: "I really love that building and so enjoyed the process of researching and writing about it. I think the design is exquisite."

Some additional perspective. I find the work to share many of the characteristics of "Structural Expressionism" (references include Kenzo Tange as well as Sir Norman Foster, Renzo Piano, Santiago Calatrava and others), providing a more human touch to classic "International School" architecture.

One could equally cite influences from the "Organic Modernist" movement created by Frank Lloyd Wright (other references include, again, Kenzo Tange, and Louis Sullivan, Claude Bragdon, Hugo Häring, Arthur Dyson and others).

Bruce particularly adored the work of Louis Kahn, and took us all for a tour of the Salk Institute in California in 1970.

Of course he was a huge fan of Frank Lloyd Wright, as were we all, with his era-defining project Falling Water. However he once told me that he thought Wright lost it in his later years, consumed by his own popularity.

Note, I spoke with architect Stacy Simmons who took over the HFB project after Bruce went to England. The guy is about 90 years old. He confirmed that the designs for the building were Bruce's. Stacy only did implementation of the plans after Bruce left.

I also spoke with Hugh Edward White Jr., son of the principal Ed White for whom Bruce worked while at WHA and Freeman-White Associates. He also remembered Bruce after many decades, and spoke highly of him.

A TEACHING ENGAGEMENT AT LEEDS...



In the Fall of 1964, Bruce accepted a position as Design Critic, Architecture at the University of Leeds, Yorkshire, England for the 1964-1965 academic year. It was a growth opportunity for Bruce, a great adventure for wife Suzanne, and an eye-opening experience for young Laurie, Amy and Robbie.

Bruce was a gifted leader of teams, and his students, affectionately known as "The Lads," maintained relations with Bruce for years, even visiting him in Boulder Colorado over 10 years later.



Top: "The Lads" with little Robbie Robertson in the middle

Bottom: "The Lads" hard at work on the designs for Invershiel

Facing page top: images from newspaper article on following page. First, the elevation of the main manor house, the same plan seen in the bottom photo on facing page

Facing page bottom, Bruce's plan for the complete village the client intended to build in the hills of North Carolina near Grandfather Mountain.

...AND THE INVERSHIEL PROJECT

Invershiel Village

4261 Tynecastle Highway,
Linville, NC

Master plan and design for
Julian Morton, Jr. (direct client)

Completed 1967

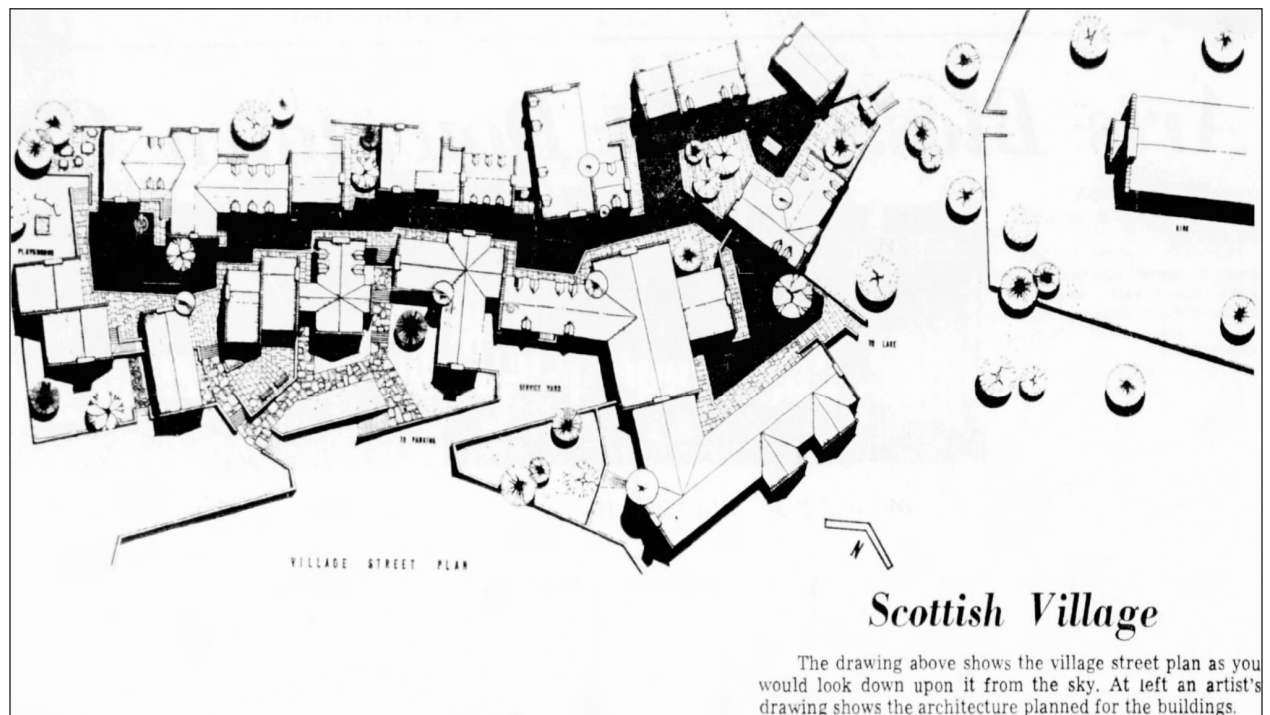
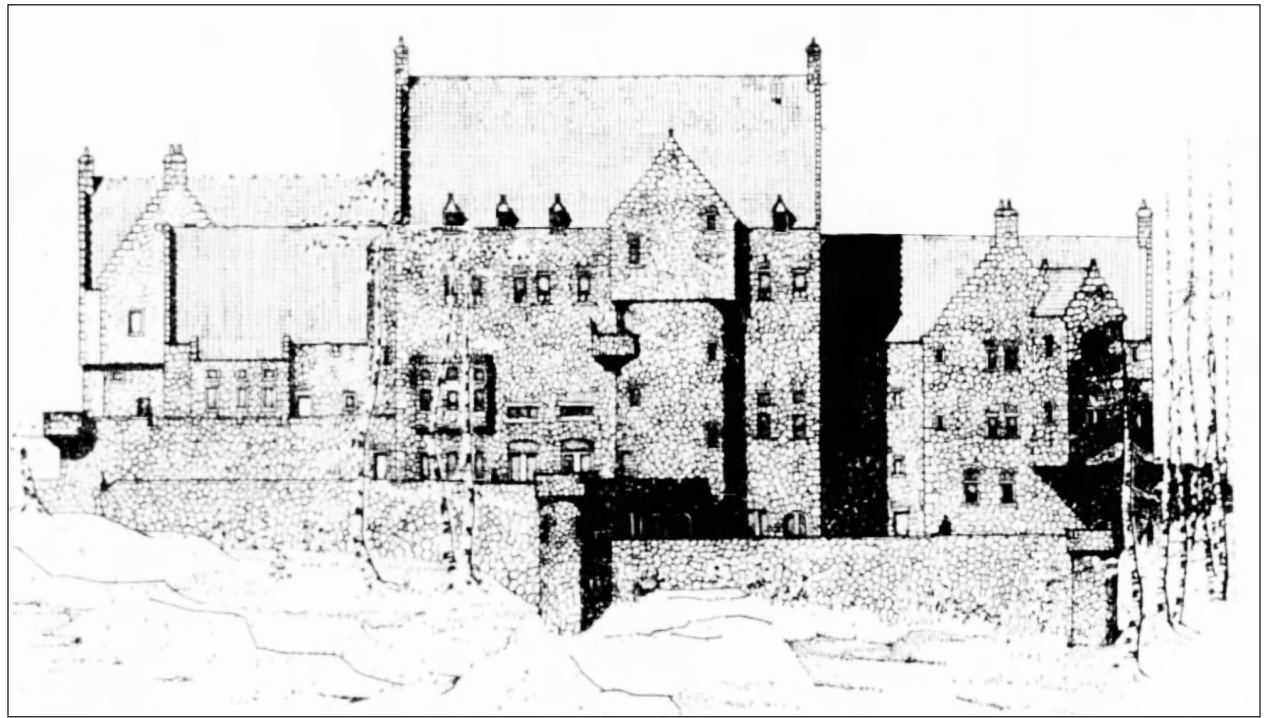
Still there

While at Leeds, Bruce had the chance of a lifetime to explore his Scottish heritage. A wealthy North Carolinian, Julian Morton Jr., reached out to Bruce. The mission? Design and build an authentic Scottish village on Morton land near Grandfather Mountain, NC.

Grandfather Mountain already had an active "Highland Games" event and the Morton family wanted to take it a step further. (The Highland Games are still going strong up to this time.)

As for Bruce, he went on 5 research trips into Scotland, eventually settling on 16th century architecture for the project. With 15 of his architecture student "Lads," complete designs for the entire village were completed.

After return to the US in the Summer of 1965, Bruce handed off the individual home construction projects to his Carnegie Mellon classmate and the husband of Suzanne's best friend, Charles A. Hastings. Charles completed, among other structures, the main manor house of the village, in which the Mortons lived.



'Scottish' Resort Will Cost \$3.5 Million

An elaborate resort with a distinct Scottish flavor, will be started this summer in N. C. mountains.

The price tag would make a Scotsman blanch—\$3.5 million, not counting the value of the 1200 Acres of Avery County mountainside involved.

The central portion will be a complete village—including an shops—built along the lines of 16th century Scottish architecture.

Later, an exclusive club will be built higher up the mountain. It, too, will follow Scottish architecture motif.

The developers are Julian Morton Jr. and his mother, Mrs. Agnes McRae Morton of Wilmington and Linville.

Julian Morton's brother, Hugh, is the proprietor of Grandfather Mountain, which he has developed into a nationally known tourist attraction.

Their sister, noted amateur golfer Aggie Morton Cocke, is building a \$1.5-million golf course on the lower slopes of Grandfather, near the Scottish village site. It, too, has a Scottish theme.

And another Morton brother, Tommy, owns nearby Grandmother Mountain.

The property was acquired by the current Morton generation's great-grandfather, Donald McRae, and his sons, Hugh and Donald McRae, in 1886.

They bought 23,000 acres, including Grandfather Mountain, much of the surrounding land and the little crossroads of Linville. The McRae's original interest was the timber and other natural resources (there was a gold mine on Grand-

father at the time).

Later, they developed Linville into a posh mountain resort, with its famous Eseeola Inn and adjacent golf course. When the inn burned in 1935, an annex was turned into the present Eseeola Lodge.

Hugh McRae became a well-known figure in the state, figuring in the development of Wrightsville and Carolina beaches near Wilmington. He built what is now U.S. 221 from Linville up to Blowing Rock for \$25,000 and turned it over to the federal government for \$1.

The property was divided among the family after Hugh McRae's death in 1950.

The ancestral home of the McRae clan is near the village of Invershiel in Scotland. It is the name chosen for the new Scottish village.

The idea was originated by Mrs. Morton after the first Highland Games (another of her ideas were held on Grandfather 11 years ago. It has been in a more or less active planning stage since.

The property is on a steep slope rising 1,000 feet from a highway, N.C. 105 from Linville to Boone, to the rocky crest of Dunvegan, a 5,050-foot peak, facing Grandfather Mountain.

The streams that are the headwaters of the Watauga and Linville rivers originate on the property. They will be dammed to form two lakes. Because the Continental Divide runs through the property, the waters from one run into the Mississippi, the other into the Atlantic.

Last year the Mortons engaged Charlotte architect Bruce Robertson to design the project. He was, at the time,

spending a year in England lecturing at Leeds College of Architecture and Design.

He made five trips into Scotland to study the still remaining old buildings. The Mortons went over last summer to join in the inspection.

They decided that the 16th century was the last period when the Scottish architectural style was in full swing. After that, English styles began to dominate.

No place in Scotland is as authentically old Scottish as the village to be built in North Carolina will be, Robertson says.

Architect Robertson enlisted about 15 of his English students in drafting work for the project, and some of them are expected to come here this summer to work on this and other projects.

Several of the shops will be strictly non-16th century in function. These will include a bank, beauty parlor, antique shops and a dry cleaning establishment.

But many also will be similar to those of 400 years ago: A forge, perhaps the only bagpipe manufacturing shop in the United States, a handmade furniture shop and an import shop.

The inn will have 35 rooms, with an adjacent restaurant. Several of the buildings will have apartments over the shops.

At the far end of the winding street through the village will be the kirk (church), but this is likely to be Episcopal rather

than the Presbyterian Church favored by most Scotsmen. That's because the Mortons are Episcopalians.

All the buildings will be of stone (expected to come from quarries on Grandfather) and will have such architectural touches as tile roofs, exterior stairs, leaded glass, common walls, common chimneys and what are called crow-stepped gables.

The same flourishes will be used in the club farther up the slope. It will look like the fortified houses of old Scotland, but few people actually will live within it. Members and guests will stay in connecting cottages running along adjacent ridges.

While the Scottish village will be distinctly a tourist attraction and sort of a shopping center for people with an interest in things Scotch (excluding whisky), the club will be something else again.

It will be out of the financial reach of the average tourist. As a matter of fact, it likely will be downright expensive.

So will the house sites that have been picked out here and there around the property. Robertson and Morton disagree amiably over whether there will be 80 (the architect) or up to 200 (the owner).

Morton and his mother already have started work on their residence, using the same design, on the property.

Other features will include a steeplechase course and stables

show ring, hunt course, extensive bridle paths and six miles of roads wandering all over the acreage.

Work on the village is expected to begin this summer, and as much as 75 per cent of it may be ready for the 1967 tourist season.

The club will come after the village is completed.

All this is expected to give added impetus to the rapid resort build-up in the eastern portion of Avery County. A ski lodge, several new golf courses and other resort developments have blossomed there in the last few years.

If it seems hazardous financially to invest so much so far away from the big population centers, one has only to look at the figures: Tourism already is a \$1 billion-a-year business in North Carolina and ranks third among the state's basic industries.

Which would make even a Scotsman sit up and take notice.



Facing page and top: article about the Invershiel project from The Charlotte Observer, May 1, 1966

Bottom: image from an in-depth pictorial review in Palm Springs Life Magazine, SO 1967. It portrays the grand procession of pipers in full Scottish garb during the 1967 Highland Games at Grandfather Mountain, adjacent to the Invershiel project. See Extra Points 3 at the end of this book for the full colorful article



Top: Bruce and son Robbie at Grandfather Mountain in 1965 or 1966



Bottom: A "croft house" completed on the site, based on the master plan designs of BR. Julian Morton and his mother Agnes are in the doorway, and a goat is grazing on the roof. Photo is by Julian's brother Hugh, a notable photographer

Facing page top: The Invershiel manor house as completed by Bruce's Carnegie Mellon classmate Charles A. Hastings

Facing page bottom: Bruce's parents Earl and Ginnie, Suzanne, Suzanne's best friend Cranny Cranford Hastings, Bruce and Laurie at Grandfather Mountain in 1965 or 1966

What Palm Beach Life Had to Say (1967):

"...The first view of the village is quite unbelievable. Julian Morton's town house atop a hill is of native stone, a replica of one of the main towers of Claypots Castle near Aberdeen. Its leaded glass windows are faithful copies of Sterling Castle near Glasgow.

Up the road snuggles Mrs. Agnes MacRae Morton's "Croft House," also of native stone with emerald-green sod roof and curved, stone-walled terrace.

In the old country rock houses were prevalent because wood was at a premium and had to be imported from Scandinavia. Leave it to Julian Morton. There was plenty of native stone here as well as a legion of skilled stone masons with imagination; excellent carpenters, all born and raised in this area."





In the Fall of 1967, Bruce established Bruce Robertson Associates. He set up his office in the glamorous Home Federal Building, designed by himself as part of Walter Hook & Associates, and accepted to the national Register in 2008.

We know of some of Bruce's work here. The Mecklenburg Center for Human Development (completed in 1970) won for Bruce his first award under his own firm. The Cabarrus County Courthouse

(1970) is a fine modernist structure that has recently been added to, with respect and enhancement of the original BR design. He engaged in urban planning and master planning for the Brooklyn slum area of Charlotte (aka the "Blue Heaven" area), revealing for the first time his great passion for rebuilding cities. However other projects - including private residences mentioned by Bruce in his 1971 curriculum Vitae, have not been identified.

What we know well is his office! It was jam packed with mid-century modern furniture of classic design. The Bodil Kjaer desk (aka "the Bond desk"). The "big fish eating little fish" sculpture. The large Leonardo Davinci art book. The Ward Bennett leather sled chair. And the Mies Van Der Rohe glass table that had a square glass top that Bruce had re cut to be round. The Arne Jacobsen oxford chair in red leather, not sure what became of it.

What Bruce Had to Say at His Own Firm (1967):

From the very nicely presented article at right:

"It's unfortunate that the young people here in Charlotte are being suppressed and kept from being a part of this movement. They want to be where the action is. This means being together in apartments and concentrated in communities with development of pedestrian areas to create some activity..."

"...The younger generation is wide open to new ideas. They should be...."

"...Really good design is something you're not really aware of. If the client is not aware, it's very difficult for the architect to design good buildings. The demanding client is insulated by what's happening in the mainstream of contemporary life. Clothes, for example, should be fun, and it's unfortunate that they're not in this part of the country..."



Above: A key to Bruce's desk. It is a very rare round version, Bruce preferred that to the square

Right: Interview from The Charlotte Observer, October 13, 1967

Facing page: Bruce in his office, 1967

Architect Says

City Misses Youth Target

By MAMIE ZILLMAN

Observer Home Furnishings Editor

His pipe clenched determinedly in his teeth, architect Bruce Robertson eased into his sleek leather chair and made bold statements about Charlotte's "now" generation housing.

"The younger people and the older people have no business living in single family dwellings," he said as the smoke weaved up the side of his face. "People are too spread out to reach their jobs or the stores. This urban sprawl causes lack of identity."

"In Charlotte there is not a good example of an action-packed or luxury apartment complex. None, such as the apartments in California, really appeal to the young. There's something about the young people that needs to be expressed."

"Charlotte is in danger of not being able to attract young people," he said, his hands clasped behind his head. "The creative people—unless they get trapped here—will be forced to leave. There's a great deal being offered to influence our lives that's not funneling into the South."

"It's unfortunate that the young people here in Charlotte are being suppressed and kept from being a part of this movement. They want to be where the action is. This means being together in apartments and concentrated in

communities with development of pedestrian areas to create some activity."

RESTING AN ankle on the knee of his other leg, he went on to say that apartment complexes should be grouped together with shops and stores underneath, as in the "Old World approach."

"The younger generation is wide open to new ideas. They should be. Are they in Charlotte? If so, what are they doing? They must be terribly frustrated. The facilities that are being offered to them are those that are being financed by people of the older generation, not by young people," he said.

Mr. Robertson, who dresses casually for a Charlotte businessman, feels there is an opportunity here for real architecture. He said Charlotte's apartments adopt window dressing instead of letting the design be real design requirements of closeness, privacy and identity.

Total design, he said, takes into account the individual who will use the space. A success-

fully designed building should have enough flexibility so the individual can adjust to the environment himself, he explained.

"Really good design is something you're not really conscious of," he said. "If the client isn't aware, it's very difficult for an architect to design good buildings. The demanding client is insulated by what's happening in the mainstream of contemporary life. Clothes, for instance, should be fun, and it's unfortunate that they're not in this part of the country."

He continued by saying young people can well afford to buy throwaway furniture if they have an environment to do this in. Unfortunately, that's not in Charlotte, according to Mr. Robertson. This is a conforming sort of culture that doesn't lend itself to trying this sort of thing," he said.

"I like certain things not to have much use, just to be there for fun," he commented.

"Long, white shaggy carpet is about the last thing anyone would want to use, but the luxury of it makes it worthwhile."

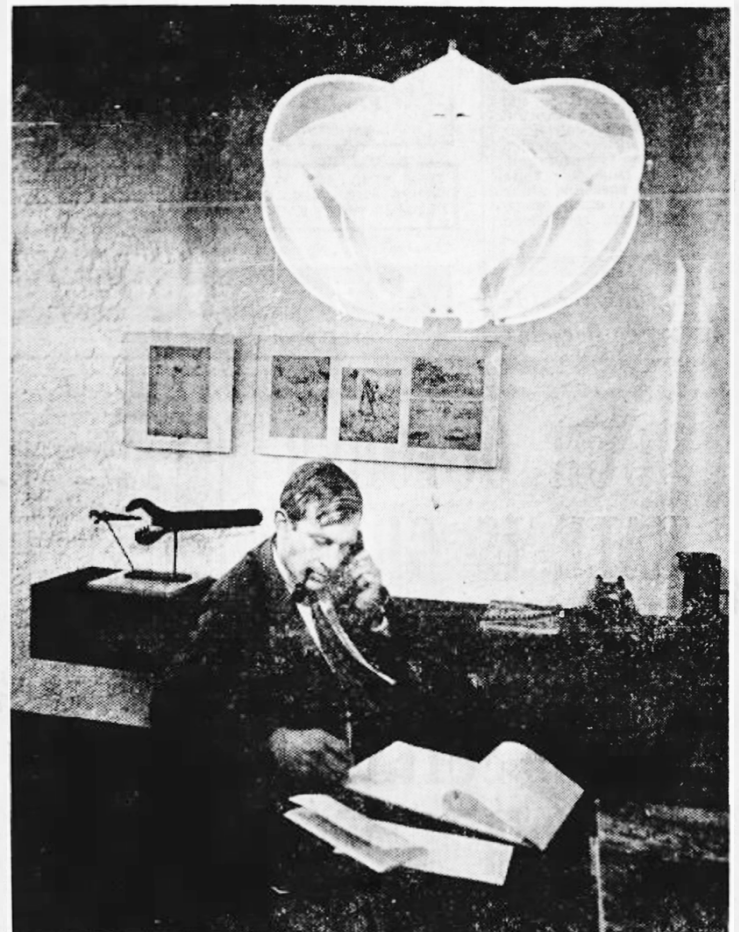
FURNITURE can be designed for buildings, he agreed, but he didn't think it was necessary. He thinks there's enough good furniture on the market already.

"There's furniture, then there's really good furniture. It's asking an awful lot for everything to make a statement, but the really good pieces will. A well-designed piece of furniture makes a statement about function, craftsmanship, proportion and balance."

Considering these, Mr. Robertson said a careful blend of different styles is "rich." He said all great design is compatible, but there must be discrimination.

"Just because something is old doesn't make it good, nor does the new make it bad," he said.

An example of what he believes can be seen in his North Tryon Street office on the sixth floor of the Home Federal Building, which he designed with Stacey Simmons for Freeman-White. A six by nine-foot rosewood door opens



Observer Photo—Philip Morgan

'HAPPENING' OFFICE IS ILLUMINATED BY FIBERGLASS LIGHT

... Bruce Robertson talks with client over telephone.

into what he describes as a "happening."

"A sense of entrance is important," he said. "There should be no jump-off point between interiors and exteriors."

Textured white plaster molds into rounded corners in the office. A black leather partition black goat hide sofa, which has probably swallowed countless visitors in its depths, sits a round glass table with chrome legs on a red Finnish Rug. The Ward Bennett honey-colored sled chair is laced with thongs in the black.

Beside it stands a floor lamp with a chrome base and a circular white top. Square chrome legs base a massive rosewood desk. Behind it is Mr. Robertson's favorite armchair, upholstered in red

and designed by Arne Jacobsen, a Danish architect.

Another armchair and a ratan seat were designed by LeCorbusier. Designing is done from two Bentwood high stools.

A designer, Mr. Robertson has been involved in the master plan at UNC at Charlotte, the gymnasium and student union at Johnson C. Smith University, West Charlotte High School, Charlotte Railway Station, Gaston County Hospital and Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital.

The last major project he was involved in was the Mecklenburg County jail.

CABARRUS COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Cabarrus County Jail & Courthouse

77 Union Street South,
Concord, NC

Design for Bruce Robertson
Associates

Completed 1970

Still there, with a first class
expansion just completed.

This is not the most acclaimed project of Bruce under his own firm. That honor would go to the Mecklenburg Center for Human Development, which won an AIA award. But the Courthouse is handsome nonetheless.

Interestingly the large addition by Silling Architects in 2024 (seen at the right side of the bottom picture on this page and on the facing page) retains and accentuates the stylistic direction of the original structure by Bruce. For this impressive work, Silling won a Merit Award from AIA West Virginia.



What Jeremy Jones, Lead Designer of Silling Architects, Had to Say (2026):

This

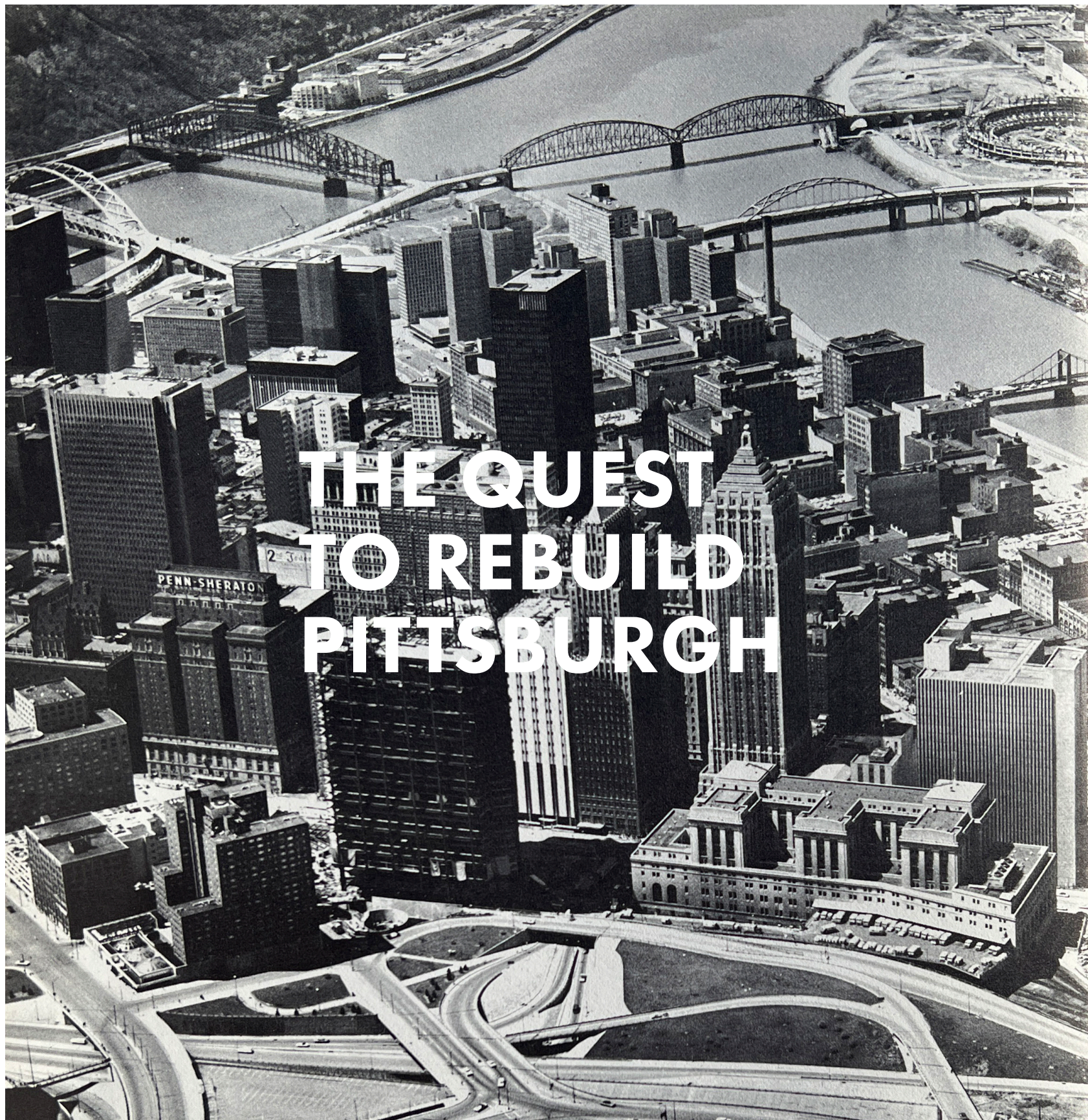


Right: outstanding designs from Silling Architects as built and portrayed on the company's website

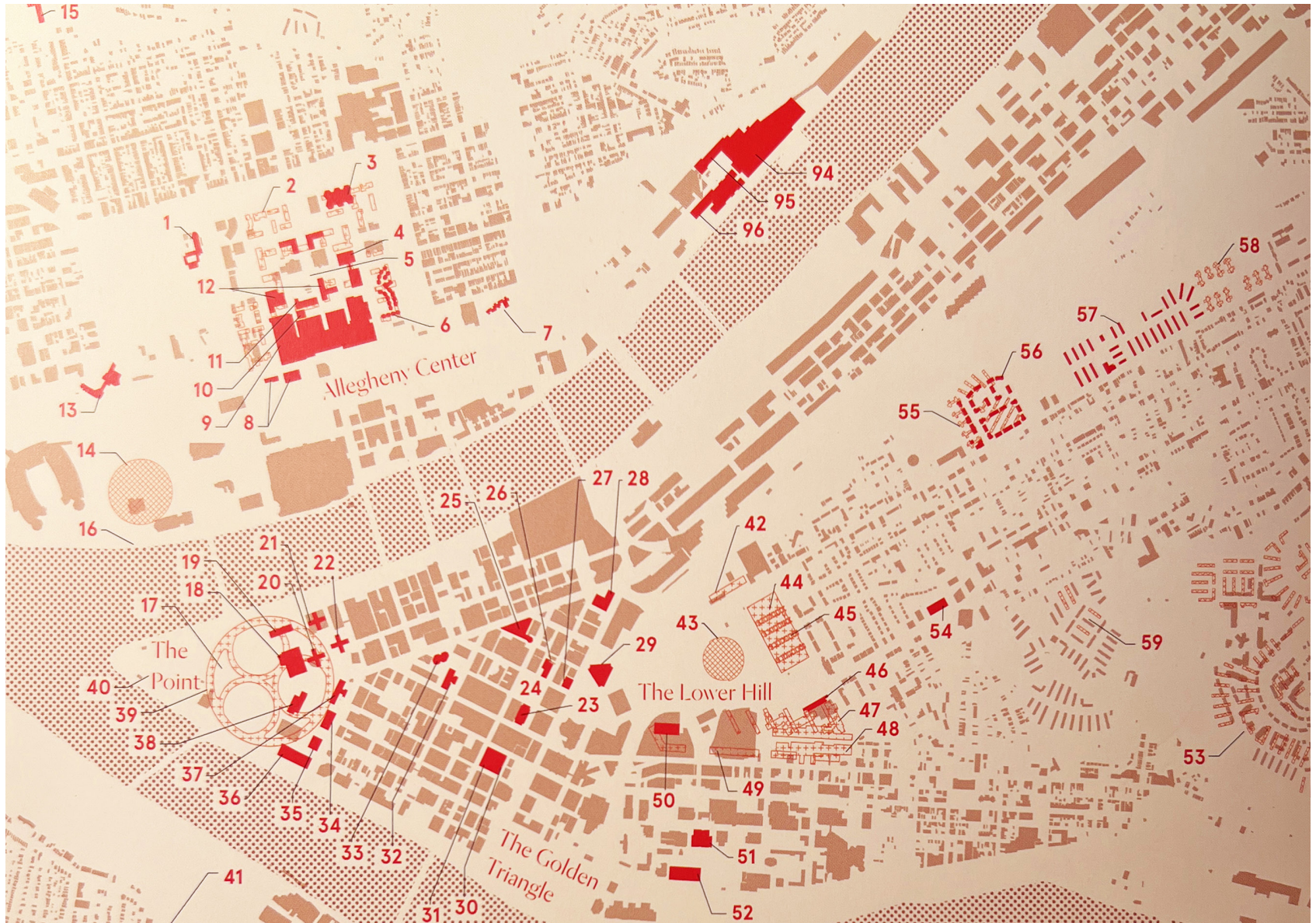
Facing page: showing what Bruce's Cabarrus County Courthouse looks like today



Facing page: photo from the excellent book, "Imagining the Modern: Architecture and Urbanism of the Pittsburgh Renaissance," by el Samahy, Grimley and Kubo (2015). The book charts the complicated history of Pittsburgh's dramatic and sometimes painful transformation into the exemplary city of today



THE QUEST TO REBUILD PITTSBURGH



Bruce's growing passion to rebuild neighborhoods was becoming stronger and in late 1968 Bruce got what he must have felt was a hot offer: the nationally prominent Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) offered him a position as Director of Planning.

Indeed Bruce was an ideal candidate for such a position: Pittsburgh born, Princeton (economics and sociology) and Carnegie Mellon (architecture) educated, and with an impressive portfolio of public project

designs under his belt.

He took the offer, closed his Charlotte design firm and moved the family to Pittsburgh in September, 1968.

Bruce worked under legendary URA chief Robert B. Pease. As Bruce arrived, directions were changing. In the previous years there had been whole scale clearing of neighborhoods and replacement with large civil projects. Then Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April of 1968 with riots ensuing. Black power was rising and

community leaders demanded a greater say in urban planning. Right on!

In Bruce's time, the focus shifted to using the powers of the URA to create large quantities of affordable housing.

According to his CV, Bruce oversaw over 500 housing starts with his team of 20. He worked in a stately old building at 200 Ross Street.

His main focus was on securing approval for redevelopment projects in different

areas of the city, such as Manchester in North Pittsburgh, and sections of the Hill in the center of town.

For this, Bruce was called upon to supercharge his political skills, and he is found evangelizing his projects amongst all stakeholders including black community leaders. Daughter Amy recalls that he even had the 3 of us children going to large public events, almost entirely attended by African Americans, each of us wearing a dashiki (the black pride smocks popular back in those days).

Bruce had some success in building bridges with the residents of the areas to be redeveloped, as the articles following detail. He believed that affordable housing could be structured for the benefit of all, most importantly, the current residents. He put himself out there at a time when it was not entirely safe to do so.

Alas, by the Spring of 1970, the wheels came off of the effort to rebuild cities, locally and nationally. Control of the critically important Model Cities program (which provided federal funding) was moved from the URA to a new mayor who was uninterested. Nationally, the incoming Nixon administration cut funding. A massive exodus of URA and Pittsburgh city planners ensued. As for Bruce, he resigned in May, 1970, and his departure was officially regretted by the URA's Board of Directors.

These images are from "Imagining the Modern."

Top: Pittsburgh legendary Urban Planning Chief Robert B. Pease in his office, perhaps contemplating his next bold move to remake the city

Bottom: image of neighborhood negotiations with URA officials

Facing page: some of the many projects undertaken to transform the city. Project 6 can be seen in the Allegheny Center area. This project was designed by Bruce after his URA tenure ended



BRUCE'S FOCUS: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Emphasis Shifts From Commercial

Homes Given Priority In \$15.3 Million Renewal

By JOHN COVERT

A shift in emphasis is taking place in Pittsburgh's urban renewal program.

With the beginning of a \$15.3 million, three-area project — hopefully this fall — the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) will reflect the national switch from commercial to residential priorities.

The areas marked for extensive redevelopment, URA said, are:

✓ The section of Manchester on the North Side bounded by Hamlin, Manhattan, Junata, and Sedgwick streets, containing 45 acres. (Project cost, \$3.8 million.)

✓ The Webster-Elba area of the Middle Hill, including part of Herron Ave., containing 94 acres. (Project cost, \$5.1 million.)

✓ The Roberts - Devilliers section of the Lower Hill, including a part of Centre and Wylie Avenues, containing 36 acres. (Project cost, \$3.6 million.)

2 More Years Planned

The price tags reflect only the proposed first - year expenditures for each area with two years of work already planned beyond that, URA said.

Remaining funds, approximately \$2.8 million, will go toward relocation and other benefits.

The over-all project will be part of the Federal Neighborhood Development Program (NDP), but the stress is upon local participation in planning the project and upon retaining as much of the existing community fabric as possible.

In the Webster-Elba section, for instance, 117 structures are scheduled for demolition by the URA. But another 146 structures will be rehabilitated, instead, to avoid altering the community more than necessary.

Rehabilitation will be privately done, but the owner will be aided financially with City, and possibly Federal, funds.

The first year of the program, URA reports, is to include acquisition of properties later to be developed, basically for new housing, and the demolition of structures beyond rehabilitation.

Housing for families that must be relocated will be provided as soon after acquisition of their property as possible, URA says.

This will involve approximately 196 families in Roberts-Devilliers, 608 in Web-

ster-Elba, and 158 in Manchester.

However, by the end of the project a net gain in families is seen by URA, 96 in Roberts-Devilliers, 608 in Webster-Elba, and 158 in Manchester.

Approximately 1250 new dwelling units are to be added throughout the three areas.

The first year price tag of \$15.3 million will be divided between the Federal Government, footing two-thirds of the costs, and the City.

But the City has enough credits accrued from past projects so that no public funds will be spent for at least the first year, according to Bruce Robertson, planning director for the URA.

Once the program goes beyond acquisition, URA will turn over the actual construction of new dwelling units to local non-profit developers.

Besides rehabilitation of present units and construction of new ones, the NDP plan calls for the development of new recreation areas and the upgrading of streets, sidewalks, sewer and water lines,

and lighting.

The Webster-Elba project is to include the jointure of Bryn Mawr and Milwaukee streets to bring the Bryn Mawr shopping center more into touch with the rest of the community.

The project areas will be pulled tighter together, Mr. Robertson said, by rerouting "through" traffic around the districts and re-designing streets for local use only.

URA says it would like to close down Fulton St. in Manchester and transform it into a pedestrian green belt.

The total project has been approved by both the URA board and the City Planning Commission.

It will go before City Council at a public hearing, tentatively set for mid-September.

From the above article:

"A shift in emphasis is taking place in Pittsburgh's urban renewal program. With the beginning of a 15.3M, 3-area project - hopefully this fall - the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) will reflect the national switch from commercial to residential priorities."

Above: The Pittsburgh Press, Jul 27, 1969

Facing page: The New Pittsburgh Courier, Aug. 16, 1969

Black Non-Profit Group To Control Hill Renewal

A black non-profit organization will have complete responsibility of rebuilding the Hill District when the proposed redevelopment comes through, according to Bruce Robertson, Director of Planning for the Urban Redevelopment of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Robertson said the choice of the group would be determined by the Redevelopment Authority.

The plans for the redevelopment program have been completed, and are awaiting approval from the City and Federal Governments.

The initial cost of the \$15 million project is to be absorbed jointly by both governments,

with the Federal Government providing two-thirds of the bill.

The work would begin in the lower Hill District, and eventually expand to include the middle Hill, and Manchester areas.

The URA elected last February to participate in the Neighborhood Development Plan, (NDP), in conjunction with The Model Cities program, in an attempt to bring about the redevelopment at a faster pace.

The plans include provision for the restoration of 82 structures on Webster Avenue that will remain in the area; sites for new houses to be acquired by the razing of sub-standard houses; and land acquisition of

Continued on Page 4, Col. 6

properties owned by absentee owners.

There will be 422 new units built in the lower Hill.

"The relocation will be difficult," admitted Mr. Robertson, "but the Urban Redevelopment is committed to seeing that those now residing in the community will not be removed until suitable quarters are found for them; that all residents are to re-enter and be re-housed; and that the present families living there have priority to re-enter the low income housing.

Public meetings will be held at 10 o'clock September 10th, September 11th, in the City Council chambers to educate the public to the feasibility of the plans.

Urging all public citizens concerned to attend, Mr. Robertson said the proposed redevelopment was a "major step forward, from which people should take heart."

These 2 articles shed light on Bruce's URA work during his 20 month engagement with the organization.

The work of the Pittsburgh URA was vast and had a long history both before and after Bruce. It is quite deeply entangled in local and national politics, and cannot be adequately summarized here.

As for Bruce, he embraced the new direction of the URA, and committed himself to the urban design, planning, approval and implementation of affordable housing.

The article on facing page describes 3 projects led by Bruce, 1 in the Manchester neighborhood in Northside, and 2 in the Hill District, a neighborhood with a famous if not infamous history for struggles related to urban renewal.

His proposals called for \$15 million in federal funding for housing development in these areas.

One month later, the above article highlights Bruce's efforts to win the support of the Black community. It was not an easy sell as there were relatively moderate factions as well as militant Black Panther groups present. And neither group was happy about what the URA had done over the last 10 years.

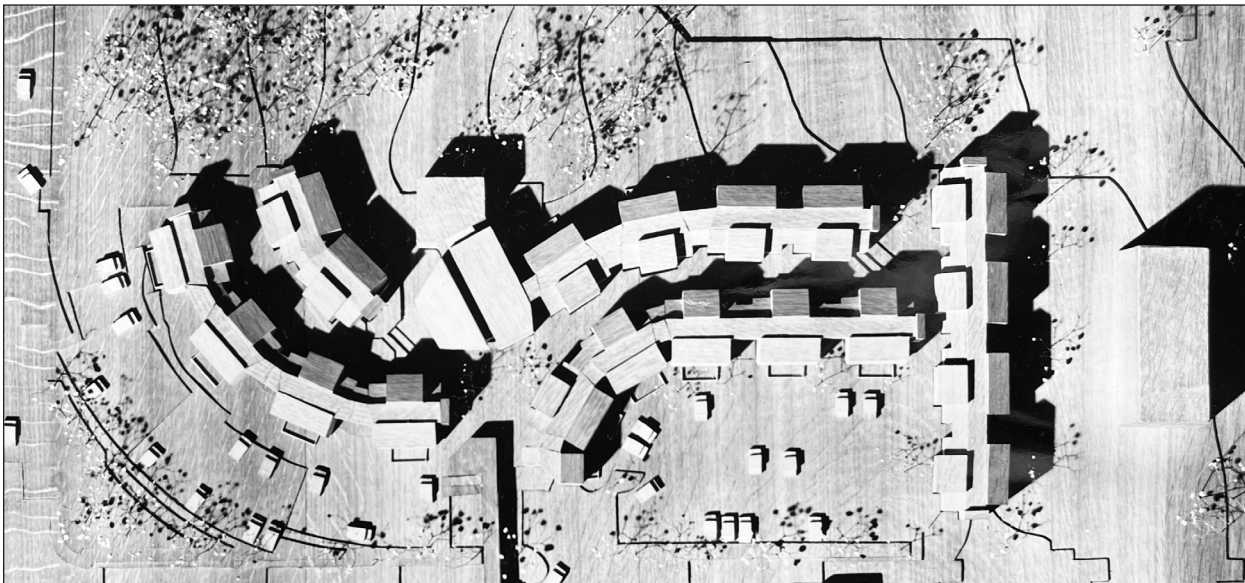
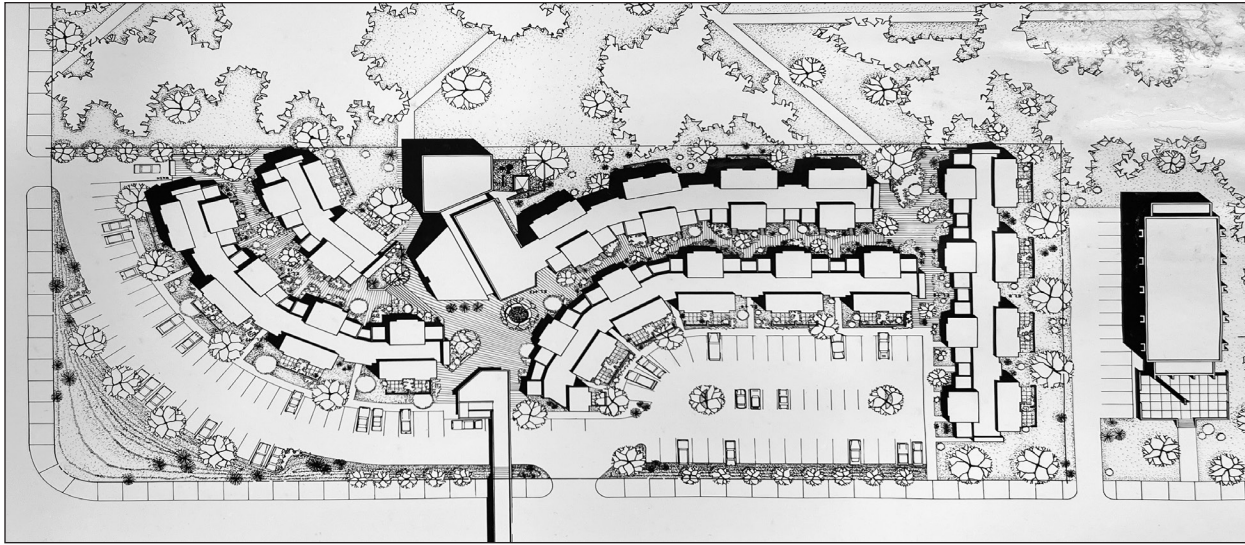
Bruce made serious and sincere promises to gain their buy-in. The general concept was to give the black community a seat at the table, and guarantee that any residents of areas slated for demolition-reconstruction would be given specific rights to find new housing.

What Bruce Had to Say (1969):

Here are a few words from Bruce as quoted in the above article:

"The relocation will be difficult, but the Urban Redevelopment Authority is committed to seeing that those now residing in the community will not be removed until suitable quarters are found for them; that all residents are to re-enter and be rehoused; and that the present families living there have priority to re-enter the low income housing..."

ALLEGHENY COMMONS EAST



Allegheny Commons East Apartments

255 E Ohio Street, Pittsburgh

Design for Tasso Katselas & Associates

Completed 1973

Still there

Back to design work!

Bruce pivoted during this tumultuous period professionally and personally.

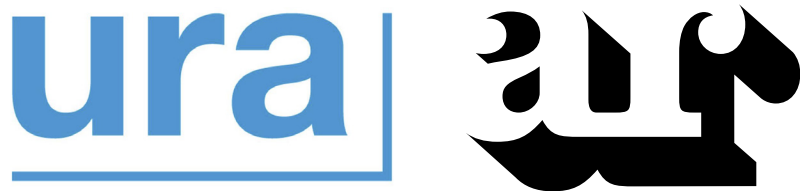
He joined the architecture firm of Tasso Katselas, perhaps the hottest of Pittsburgh's young, innovative designers. There he did some notable work, especially the award-winning Allegheny Commons East (ACE) project, which still receives high marks today (reference "Imagining the Modern"). This project is shown as #6 on the map on page 46.

ACE won Pittsburgh Urban Renewal Authority Award in 1974, and Architecture Review Apartments of the Year Citation in 1974.

Top: Bruce's designs for Allegheny Commons East

Middle: His model of the project

Facing page: a picture of the Commons shortly after completion in 1973







What Tasso Katselas Had To Say (1973):

The Allegheny Commons East project was considered a great success by Tasso Katselas, founder of the firm Bruce was working for when he conceived the design. The Tasso Katselas & Associates website still carries a detailed description of the Apartments, as reprinted below:

"Allegheny Commons East is a village on Pittsburgh's North Side in an urban redevelopment area. It consists of 114 individual, private living units in 19 separate small houses, and one garden type apartment building. The garden type apartment building contains 22 one

bedroom living units as well as the Crafts and Community Rooms for the entire village. The 19 houses each contain one efficiency, one two-bedroom, and four three-bedroom units. Each of these 19 houses is a separate structure with each living unit having its own private entrance direct from the exterior.

The design concept was to create an intimate social opportunity thru a series of architectural spaces. The requirements of 221-d-3 Federal Housing Development, although stringent, can be interpreted so that creative thought and beauty can influence economic reality. This reality must be translated into physical "energy spaces" that meet the developer's profit margin and still satisfy the human condition.

The self policing neighborhood street

is here; the zoning of pedestrian and vehicular activity is here; the open space and respect for place is here; the social and activity necessities are here; the required mix and density is here; most important, however, here also is a range of spacial possibilities that offer participation for play, talk, gatherings, and sunsets. The village is fully occupied by people that seem somehow happier to find art is not applied but natural. A pedestrian street winds its way through the center of the village creating a central spine off which the houses are entered, thus creating a community space to be used and enjoyed by all. This spine is elevated a half story above the ground level of the opposite sides of the houses. Thus, the houses are three stories in height on the pedestrian side and four stories in height on the park



or street side. The master bedrooms of the three bedroom units on the fourth floor of each unit connect each house to the next house and form a covered porch on the second and third floors which serves as entrance porches and gathering spaces. The efficiency and two bedroom units are entered from the spine through an arched opening to a private semi-enclosed porch. The three bedroom units each occupy two floors, the entrances occurring on levels 1 and 3. They are 'L' shaped in plan with one unit being the mirror image of the one next door. Together, the two units form a "U" which surrounds and embraces the single story efficiency and two story two bedroom unit in the center of each house.

The site slopes down gently from East Ohio Street toward St. Paul's Evangelical

Lutheran Church allowing a myriad of walks, paths, ramps and plazas to step down, follow the contours of the land and create plateaus for the twenty buildings.

The combination of individual houses embroidered along the pedestrian path, the way the spine "snakes" through the site pausing to accept "knobs" of tiny and larger spaces, and the way the houses step down as they follow the contours of the land conspire to conceal the fact that there are 136 units in this village of little more than 3 acres."

Above : As seen on Google Earth, the Commons is still a vibrant component of the overall Allegheny Center neighborhood

Facing page: Allegheny Commons East in the midst of construction. Bruce's design cleverly pushed the limits of federal guidelines to allow a neighborhood vibe within a low income housing project

OTHER MODERNIST ERA PROJECTS



St. Andrews Presbyterian College dormitory buildings

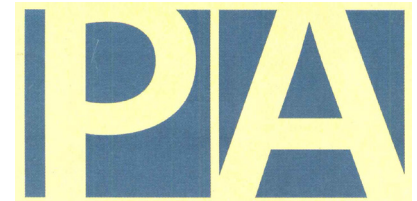
1700 Dogwood Mile St,
Laurinburg, NC

Design and working drawings
for AG Odell & Associates

Completed in 1961

Still there

The campus including the 3
BR buildings won a 1960
Progressive Architecture
Citation, and NRHP status 2015



Baltimore Civic Center

201 W Baltimore Street

Design and working drawings
for AG Odell & Associates

Completed 1963

This venue has hosted countless
major events (The Beatles, etc.)
and is still active today.

Johnson C. Smith University
Student Union (pictured) and
Gymnasium

100 Beatties Ford Road,
Charlotte, NC

Design and working drawings
for AG Odell & Associates

Completed in 1965

Still there

Susan V. Mayer's
comprehensive 2019 study
of modernist architecture in
Charlotte deemed the Student
Union worthy of study for
possible National Register of
Historic Places status.



Top: recent picture of the JCSU Student Union

Bottom: : Laurie, Amy and Robbie
(and au pair) touring the building in
1965 or 1966

Facing page top: a St. Andrews
dormitory building designed by Bruce

Facing page bottom: image of the
Baltimore Civic Center taken from a
postcard





Tarboro Fire Station

205 W St John St, Tarboro, NC
 Design for Walter Hook &
 Associates (later FWA)
 Completed 1966
 Still there



Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital

1600 E. Third Street
 Design and working drawings
 for Walter Hook & Associates
 Completed 1966
 No longer there

Top: image of the EENT from Bruce's
 portfolio

Bottom: Tarboro Fire Station as seen
 today (Google Earth)

Facing page: image of the WCHS
 Auditorium from Bruce's portfolio



West Charlotte High School Auditorium

Also including chemistry,
biology and classroom
buildings

2219 Senior Drive, Charlotte

Design and working drawings
for Freeman-White Associates
Completed 1968

No longer there

NC AIA Award 1969





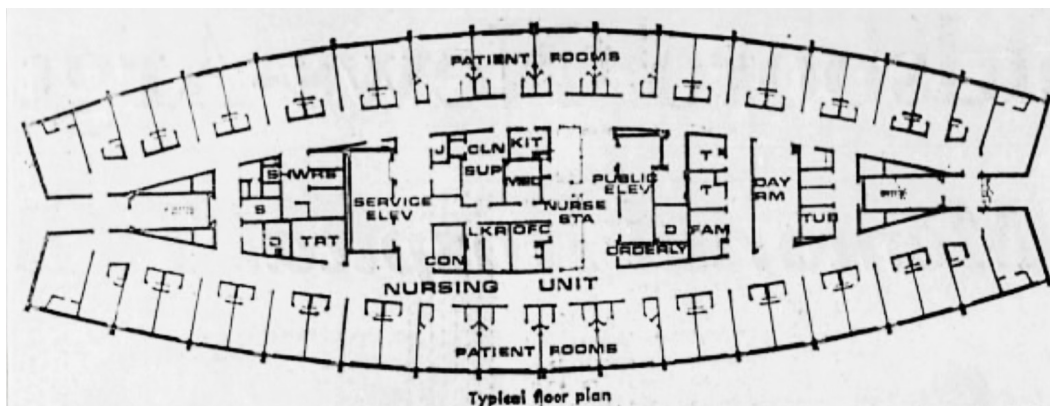
Wayne County Memorial Hospital

2700 Wayne Memorial Drive,
Goldsboro, NC

Design for Freeman-White
Associates (formerly WHA)

Completed 1969

Still there



TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN — An architect's drawing of a typical floor plan at the new Wayne County Memorial Hospital shows how the oval-shaped building provides space in the center for nursing stations, orderlies, day rooms, elevators and other facilities for the care and treatment of patients. Unneeded space at each end was eliminated by "pushing in" the walls to form the football field or racetrack shape.

Contains No Wasted Space

Unusual Shape Of New Hospital Is Explained By An Architect

Top: the hospital now

Bottom: Bruce like to make a point with his buildings and here we have a good example. No hallways! How great is that? Goldsboro News-Argus, Dec 14, 1969

Facing page top: beautiful photograph of the Mecklenburg County Jail, from Bruce's portfolio

Facing page bottom: Funny article from The Charlotte Observer, Jan 25, 1966 finds Bruce and his boss Ed White spending a night in jail. It was done for "research purposes," but I'd be sure they had fun along the way!



Mecklenburg County Jail

725 East 4th Street, Charlotte

Design and working drawings
for Walter Hook & Associates
(later FWA)

Completed 1971

No longer there

NC AIA Award 1971

Jailbirds

The source is unimpeachable — a wife. She assures us that County Manager **Harry Weatherly**, along with **Ed White** and **Bruce Robertson**, spent Tuesday in jail at Columbia, S. C., and Friday in jail at Norfolk, Va. But shucks. They were only looking for ideas to incorporate into Mecklenburg's planning of a new hoosegow.





Gaston Memorial Hospital

2525 Court Drive, Gastonia

Design for Freeman-White
Associates

Completed 1973

Still there

Top: Gaston Memorial Hospital as it
looks today

Facing page: award citation for the
Center, as it appeared in NC Architect
Magazine in 1970. Each of the other
awards has a similar writeup, citing
Bruce Robertson as Designer

**Mecklenburg Center for
Human Development**

3500 Ellington Street,
Charlotte, NC

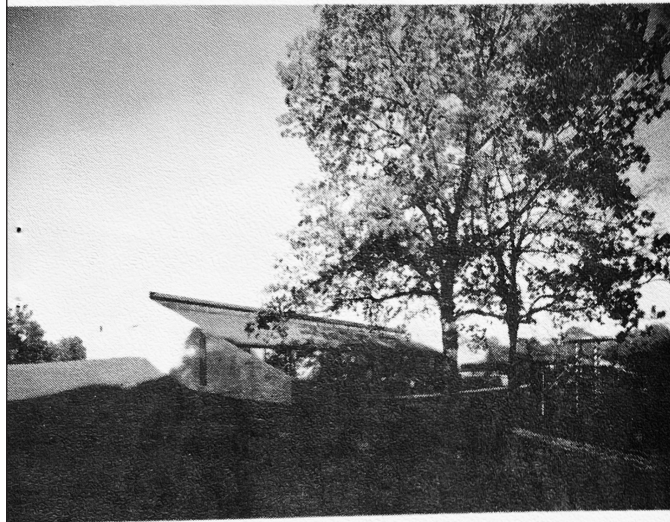
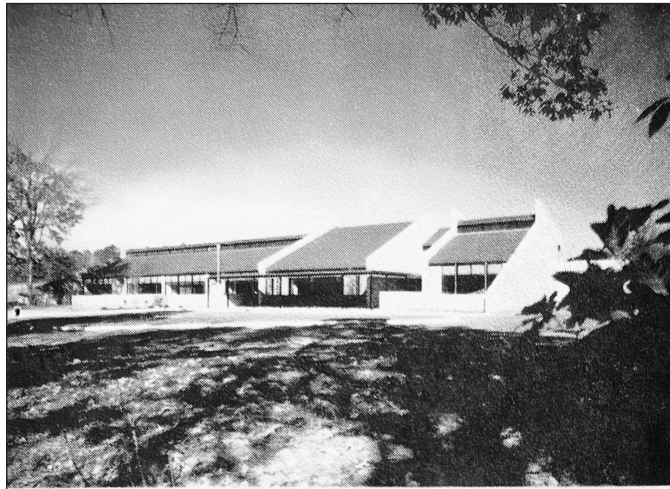
Design and working drawings
for Bruce Robertson Associates

Completed 1970

Still there

NC AIA Merit Award 1970

This was the 4th design of BR to
win an AIA award, and the 1st
under his own company.

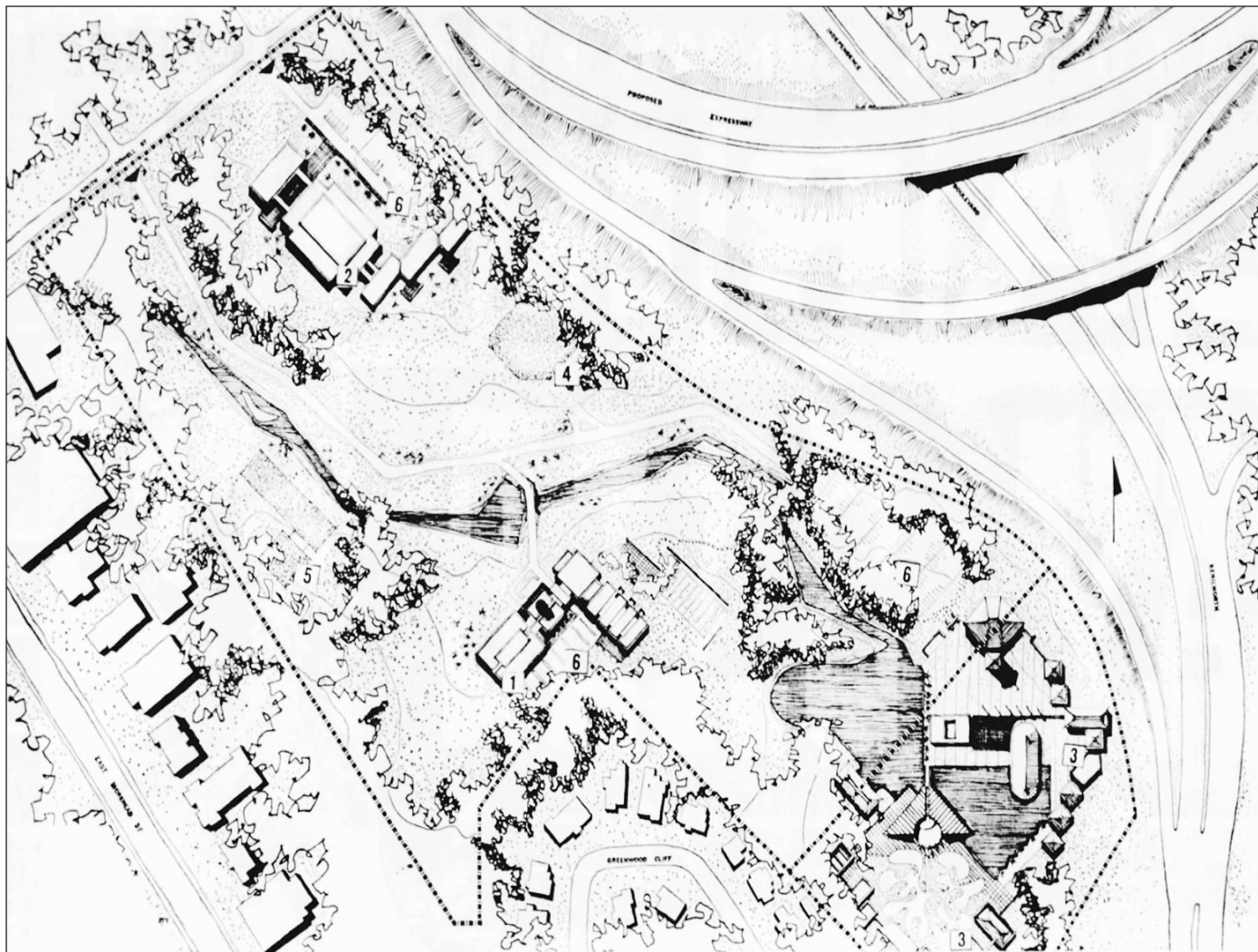


MECKLENBURG CENTER FOR
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Charlotte, N.C.
Mecklenburg County
1970



AWARD
1970 Annual
North Carolina Honor Awards
N.C.A.I.A.

Principal in Charge of Design
BRUCE ROBERTSON
Bruce Robertson Associates
Charlotte, N.C.
Associate Architect
Bracket M. McDowell



Centers, Zoo, Would Go Here

Here's the section of Brooklyn Urban Renewal Area that a group of civic leaders and government officials proposed to use for public purposes. At (1) would be the alcoholic rehabilitation center, (2) the mental retardation center, (3) the children's zoo, (4) the arboretum, (5) would be left vacant as the future site for a state mental facility, and (6) shows the parking areas. The sketch is by the architectural firm of Bruce Robertson Associates.

"Blue Heaven" Redevelopment Project

Charlotte, NC

Urban planning and master plan for Bruce Robertson Associates

Project work 1967-1968

This was a redevelopment project meant to tackle the slums in the Brooklyn area of Charlotte. As he was engaged to prepare the master planning for this effort, Bruce had the opportunity to liaise with community leaders, government authorities, and private developers in order to progress the project.

It was a chance to make a difference in society through architecture, and based on press reports quoting Bruce, one can feel that he was excited to move beyond designing hospitals and jails and the like and "create a happening" as the previous article said.

Although this project did not go forward, it provides us a preview of his extensive involvement in the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) of Pittsburgh in the following years.

Above: from *The Charlotte Observer*, Feb 22, 1968. A long article on this major redevelopment project started on page 1 of section b, and then displayed Bruce's master plan on the turn page

Facing page: old family photos of the Robertson home on Sherwood Avenue. Note Suzanne in a timeless Pawleys Island hammock, this style of hammock is also to be seen at Hart Bay in the USVI. Note also Suzanne in a butterfly chair, another one of the great design pieces Bruce kept nearby his whole career

Robertson Residence

Sherwood Avenue, Charlotte
Design, working drawings and
construction for self
Completed 1967
Still there

The home as pictured was fairly modest, and had a large backyard that sported a tree house-fort.

The Pawleys Island hammock holding Suzanne was a lifelong must-have for Bruce, and can be seen again in his final residence at Hart Bay, USVI, in the coming pages.

Likewise, the butterfly chair (aka the "Hardoy Chair," designed by Grupo Austral in Buenos Aires in 1938) was always present in Bruce's homes and even now, a fine representative of the piece is found in Laurie Robertson's home in El Tuito, Mexico.





East Mahoning Civic Center

Municipal building, police station, jail, firehouse, library and Phil's Burrow

301 East Mahoning Street, Punxsutawney, PA

Design for Tasso Katselas & Associates

Completed 1974

Still there

The center includes a children's zoo - and is the official home of world famous weatherman-rodent "Punxsutawney Phil." Note the Movie Groundhog Day, while about Punxsutawney and Phil, was not actually filmed in the town.

Tasso Katselas, for whom Bruce was working at the time, had the following comment on this project: *"Unity wedded to diversity... ..The complex has feeling of being human in form as well as content. Thought processes were translated into a form that relates directly to the site. We had a respect for the trees that were there. We had a respect for the community that wanted it."* From The Indiana Gazette, Oct 28, 1974.

What Punxsutawney Phil Had to Say:

"Gnfxscheeeeeek"



Robertson Home Addition

939-941 St. James Place,
Pittsburgh, PA

Designed for Self

Completed 1969

Still there

We moved into 939 St. James Place, and that was our main address. After a few months, Bruce bought 941 and opened a door at ground level. In the new 1st floor level he designed a den and master bedroom suite. The upper floors of 941 were a rental unit, once occupied by Betty Aberlin of Mr. Rogers fame.



Top: 939 (green) and 941 (tan) as it is today, effectively unchanged

Bottom: cute excerpt from a note by Suzanne to her dear friend Toddy Stevens, commenting on how thrilled Bruce was to "play in the ghettos" every day



*Pgh. seems to be very nice,
really. We love our house.
and Bruce gets to play in
the ghettos daily, which
thrills him to death.*

Facing page top: Google Earth image of the civic complex as it is today. Bruce's designs included all of the buildings shown on the right side of the image

Bottom: a current view of the Puxsatawney Phil statue with "Phil's Burrow" and Bruce's library building in the background



